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ABSTRACT

California's state plan for homeless education is submitted in compliance with the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. The plan includes a preface, an introduction, five sections, and six appendices. The introduction presents the following information: (1) the mandate of Title VII, Subtitle B of the McKinney Act; (2) definitions of key terms; (3) activities and recommendations of the Advisory Committee for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth; and (4) the purposes and format of the plan, including local as well as state action. Section 1 argues that the problems of homeless children and youth can only be solved through establishing and maintaining coordination and communication among all affected agencies and individuals. Section 2 proposes procedures for resolving disputes over student placement. Section 3 recommends eliminating barriers to homeless education in the following areas: (1) residency; (2) immunization; (3) registration; and (4) school records. Section 4 discusses means of providing equal access to quality education for homeless students. Section 5 suggests strategies for promoting, implementing, and monitoring the state plan. The following appendices are included: (1) a list of Advisory Committee members; (2) Subtitle B of the McKinney Act; (3) a State legal advisory on residency requirement application; (4) summaries of surveys on homeless educational needs; (5) scenarios of homeless education; and (6) homeless education program examples. (AF)

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A State Plan to Educate California's Homeless Children and Youth

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A STATE PLAN TO EDUCATE CALIFORNIA'S HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

, Prepared by
California Department of Education,
Bill Honig, Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Sacramento,California
January 1989

PREFACE

With the exception of the obvious need of a home, the needs of homeless children are the same as those of all children. They need compassion and acceptance. They need to feel that they belong, that they have a place in their community, their school. They need a good education so that they can reach their potential, but unlike other children there are major barriers in their way. Just as the children of homeless parents are not responsible for the condition of homelessness, neither can they remove that condition without the assistance of caring adults.

Who are the homeless? Why are they homeless? Some are homeless because they lost their jobs, or the breadwinner left home, or their rental was being sold and they could not scrape together the money for the first and last month's rent plus the security deposit on another rental. Some are homeless because they are substance abusers and cannot function within society's framework. Some are homeless because of abusive home lives. A few are homeless by choice. There are many reasons why people are homeless. Whatever reason the adult is homeless, the child of that adult is not homeless by choice. The children are homeless because their parents are and they have no control over their condition of homelessness.

Homeless children live with their parents or parent in the streets, in cars, in abandoned buildings or garages, by the rivers' edge, under bridges, under bushes in the park, or in temporary shelters. They may live with friends or relatives for a while or they may live in a homeless shelter. Homeless youth out in the streets on their own similarly live briefly in differnt places. Wherever and however they live, homeless children and youth live a common life. They live a life of constant upheaval with little privacy or security. They feel different and less worthy, and that their lives are out of their control, brushed by hopelessness.

Homeless children and youth face tremendous barriers in

obtaining the education they need. They face change after change in schools, difficulties transferring between schools and districts, difficulties in meeting residency requirements, difficulties with transportation to and from school, no quiet place to study (often no place at all to study), inadequate nutrition and health care, and inadequate or nonexistent facilities for showering and washing clothes--all because they are temporarily homeless.

The responsibility for homeless children and youth is ours. Parents, teachers, shelter providers, welfare and attendance officers, social workers, school nurses, counselors, school attendance review board members, principals, district office staff members, community members must remove the barriers that lie between homeless children and youth and the education to which they are entitled.

This State Plan for the Education of Children and Youth represents an attempt to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth. Developed in response to the mandates of Public Law 100-77, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C. Sections 11432-11433), the plan encourages all who are in contact with homeless children and youth to work together to ensure that the barriers standing in the way of a quality education are removed so that each child or youth can fulfill his or her potential and become a fully functioning, productive, self-fulfilled member of our society.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Education would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the members of the Advisory Committee for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in the development of the State Plan. Through a series of meetings, the committee worked with remarkable unanimity of purpose and a shared concern for the plight of homeless children and youth to develop this plan. Without their knowledge and insight into the conditions of homelessness and their empathetic understanding of its impact on children and youth, this plan would not have been possible.

In addition, the Department recognizes the coordinating efforts of Jim Spano of the Office of Compensatory Education and the assistance given by Teresa Cantrell under the leadership of Hannah Walker, Manager, Office of Compensatory Education; and the writing efforts of Barbara Sandman, who captured the ideas and concerns of the Advisory Committee into the written plan.

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INTRODUCTION

The Mandate

In July 1987, the United States Congress enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Title VII, Subtitle B, Education for Homeless Children and Youth, states that:[1]

> *It is the policy of Congress that__*
> *(1) each State educational agency shall assure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have access to a free, appropriate public education which would be provided to the children of a resident of a State and is consistent with the State school attendance laws; and*
> *(2) in any State that has a residency requirement as a component of its compulsory school attendance laws, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws to assure that the children of homeless individuals and homeless youth are afforded a free and appropriate public education. (Sec.721)*

Sections 11432 and 11433 of the Act authorize each state to carry out the stated policies, identify an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and prepare and carry out the State plan as described in subsection (e) as follows:

> *(1) Each State shall adopt a plan to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within the State which will contain provisions designed to__*
> *(A) authorize the State educational agency,*

[1]All references are to the Statute. It may be found at 42 U.S.C., Sections 11432-11433

the local education agency, the parent or guardian of the homeless child, homeless youth, or the applicable social worker to make the determinations required under this section; and

(B) Provide procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth.

(2) Each plan adopted under this subsection shall assure, to the extent practicable under requirement relating to education established by State law, that local education agencies within the State will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (6).

(3) The local educational agency of each homeless child or youth shall either__

(A) continue the child's or youth's education in the school district of origin for the remainder of the school year; or

(B) enroll the child or youth in the district where the child or youth is actually living;

Whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.

(4) The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

(5) Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other children in the school selected according to the provisions of paragraph (3), including educational services for which the child meets eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged, and educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs for vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meal programs.

(6) The school records of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained__

(A) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school district; and
(B) in a manner consistent with section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act.[2]

Definitions

In the nonregulatory guidelines issued by the United States Department of Education following the enactment of the McKinney Act, the terms "child" and "youth" were defined as follows:

> For the purposes of this section, "child" and "youth" includes those persons who, were they residents of the State, would be entitled to a free public education.

The term "homeless" was defined as follows:

> A homeless individual is one who (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence or (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

The Advisory Committee for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

In order to comply with the requirements of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, the California State Department of

[2]See Appendix B for the full text of Subtitle B of the Mckinney Act

Education convened a committee of people from throughout the state to advise in the collection of data about homeless children and youth and in the development of this state plan. Members of the committee included representatives of school districts, public and private homeless shelters, public and private social service agencies, and advocacy groups.[3]

The objectives for the state plan that were recommended by the Advisory Committee for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and adopted by the State Board of Education herein are:

- To promote interagency cooperation at both state and local levels,

- To ensure access to school for all homeless children and youth, and

- To promote quality education for all homeless children and youth, ensuring equal access to special programs and services.

Over the course of the four months that the Advisory Committee worked together, a set of beliefs about meeting the educational needs of homeless children and youth emerged which became the platform upon which the plan was built. These have been adopted by the State Board of Education to guide local educators as they plan, with other concerned and involved community members, how to meet the varied educational needs of the homeless children and youth in their school district.

<u>Beliefs about the Education of Homeless Children and Youth</u>

- Every individual of school age has the right to an equal and appropriate education.

- Homeless children and youth have an equal right to quality education.
- Homelessness is a transitional state. It lasts only until the

[3]See Appendix A for a list of Advisory Committee members

children have a home.

- Homeless children and youth are a subset of a larger category of students identified as "at risk".

- It is the responsibility of adults to remove the barriers that are keeping children and youth out of school.

- In order to place and keep homeless children and youth in school, the school, the school district, and all other responsible agencies must work together.

- All adults who work with homeless children and youth must be sensitive to their particular needs and condition.

- Each school district should develop its own plan, considering a wide variety of options or strategies for meeting the particular needs of their homeless population.

- In planning how best to meet the needs of homeless children and youth, district and school personnel should utilize and expand or modify, as necessary, existing policies, procedures, and strategies.

Introduction to the State Plan

The State Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth has two major purposes:

- to raise the level of awareness of school districts and schools to the needs of homeless children and youth, and

- to offer ideas and suggestions for how those needs might be met.

The McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 mandates a state plan for the education of homeless children and youth; it does not mandate a local plan. However, given the variety of

needs and conditions of homeless children and youth and the critical need for collaborative action with other agencies and individuals, local planning seems essential. Therefore, in anticipation that districts with homeless children and youth will develop plans for meeting their educational needs, suggestions for local plans are included in each section of the State Plan.

The Appendix attached to this plan includes three sections of information for local school districts to use in the design of policies and procedures for meeting the educational needs of the homeless school-aged children in their district. First, a copy of the statute is included along with a copy of the legal advisory on residency. Districts should refer to these documents as they examine local residency requirements and begin to consider board policies and procedures.

Second, the summaries of the surveys of homeless shelter directors and of school district and county office of education staffs conducted in response to the requirement of Section 11433 of the McKinney Act to gather data on homeless children and youth are included. These summaries should be considered in designing of strategies for removing barriers to their education.

Finally, the scenarios and descriptions of programs that serve homeless children and youth should be used by districts as background to developing a plan that will best meet the needs of the homeless children and youth who live in their districts.

SECTION I

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

In November, 1988, the Department of Education conducted a survey of school districts and county offices of education and of homeless shelter directors to gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth, the nature and extent of problems of their access to and placement in school, and the difficulties of identifying their special needs. The surveys identified two kinds of barriers to education--those that are family-related and those that are school-related. The responses on both sets of surveys indicated that the greatest barriers to the education of homeless children and youth were family-related, with family stress as the most important barrier, followed closely by students being kept out of school to care for younger children, family resistance to school enrollment, student fatigue, and families moving from shelter to shelter.[4]

These family-related problems of homelessness are of such complexity that no one agency, or even two or three agencies can solve them alone. Schools and school districts cannot eliminate these barriers of homeless children or youth although, as suggested in Section III, much can be done to eliminate or meliorate some school-related barriers to the education of homeless students. The solution to the problems of homelessness requires a communitywide, concerted effort. It is only through the collective effort of the schools, social service agencies, physical and mental health agencies, housing authorities, welfare officials, Child Protective Services, shelter providers, and other care givers and concerned agencies that the problems of homelessness and the education of homeless children and youth can be addressed and solved.

Therefore, the cornerstone of any plan for the education of homeless children and youth must be broad-based interagency coordination and communication.

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[4]See Appendix D for summaries of both surveys

At the State Level

The State Health and Welfare Agency is the lead agency for the implementation of the McKinney Act. It coordinates all McKinney Act activities in addition to other interventions being implemented in state government to address the issues of homelessness. Representatives of the involved agencies meet regularly to share and discuss homeless issues. The State Board of Education hereby directs the Department of Education to work with this committee to establish a model for interagency coordination and communication at the local level.

The State Board also recommends that the Department of Education work with the Health and Welfare Agency to develop a joint media campaign to educate both the public and private sectors about the major issues related to the education of homeless children and youth.

At the Local Level

To remove the barriers to education by maximizing the resources of the school district and the community, a two-tiered approach to the problems of educating homeless children and youth is recommended. First, an interagency committee should be established at the county level which would both advise on and advocate for the needs of children and youth "at risk". This committee should reflect the composition of the state committee and serve as the local information and advocacy conduit for the state committee. Representatives from agencies and organizations with knowledge of the homeless families with children and youth and of homeless issues and needs should be members of this committee.

Second, each school district with homeless children and youth should establish a coordinating committee to work with and be advocates for "at risk" children and youth. Members of this coordination committee might include Child Welfare and Attendance people, School Attendance Review board personnel, school social workers and counselors, teachers and specialist teachers, SB 65 Dropout Prevention personnel, and district and school administrators.

This team of district level people should be responsible for

- Establishing communication and coordination linkages with

other community groups that provide services to homeless families and youth and

- Working with them to remove the barriers that prevent homeless children and youth from attending and remaining in school.

It is recommended that the appropriate members of this team use a case management approach with homeless families and youth to:

- Identify and eliminate any barriers that prevent the child/youth from enrolling in and attending school. The adults working with the children/youth would ensure that (a) residency and immunization are not barriers to school attendance, (b) the children/youth have the necessary transportation to school, and (c) they have full access to school meals and other support aspects of the school program.

- Assist in the appropriate placement of the children/youth in the regular, on-site school program and in the special programs for which they are eligible, as well as appropriate off-site programs.

- Develop local school staff sensitivity to homeless issues and the needs of "at risk" children and youth as part of each school's regular staff development program.

By establishing and maintaining regular communication with other agencies and individuals, the district coordinating committee is able to reach out into the community to find homeless children and youth and begin the process of getting them back into school. In establishing a system for communication and coordination the district team should include representatives from social service, health and welfare, and housing agencies; advisory groups such as the Mayor's Task Force; community development groups; local public and nonprofit groups such as United Way; and local businesses and industry.

The solutions to the problems of homeless children and youth lie not through the solitary efforts of the schools, or the service agencies, or community groups; the solutions to the problems of these children and youth can only be found through the collective, coordinated efforts of all affected agencies, including the school district.

SECTION II

RESOLVING DISPUTES OVER STUDENT PLACEMENT

The McKinney Act provides that the education of a homeless child or youth may either continue in the same school district for the rest of the year, or the child or youth may be enrolled in the school district in which he or she is actually living, whichever is in the best interest of the child/youth. The State Plan is to provide procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding placement, should they arise.

In keeping with the philosophy that districts should utilize existing policies, procedures, and strategies, modifying them as necessary to meet the needs of homeless children and youth, rather than building something new, it is recommended that at both state and local levels existing complaint procedures as established in the California Administrative Code (CAC), Title 5 and the Interdistrict Agreement as structured in the Education Code[5] be used as avenues for complaints about the placement of homeless children and youth.

At the State Level

The Department of Education should review both the CAC, Title 5, section on complaint procedures and the Education Code Interdistrict Agreement to ensure that they are sufficient in scope to handle potential complaints about placement. Recommendations, if any, for revision shall be submitted to the State Board of Education for consideration by July 1, 1989.

At the Local Level

The governing board of each school district should review existing procedures and criteria for resolving both inter- and intradistrict complaints to ensure that they will allow for the resolution of placement disputes.

[5]See Education Code Sections 48204, 46600 et seq.

The governing board should also consider establishing a policy which declares that homeless children and youth have the same right as any other students to change schools because they have changed attendance areas, and that if it is in the best interest of the student to continue attending the school in which he/she is currently enrolled, he/she may do so even if the student has moved to a different attendance area.

In conjunction with this policy, the governing board should establish criteria for making student placement determinations. In addition to recognizing the right of homeless children and youth to equal access to quality education, these criteria should consider (at a minimum):

- Continuity of the student's instructional program
- Quality of the school program
- Access to special programs and services
- Availability and accessibility of transportation
- Parents'/guardians' preferences

SECTION III

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As indicated in Section I of this State Plan the surveys conducted by the Department of Education identified two kinds of barriers to the education of homeless children and youth--those that are family-related and those that are school-related. This section of the plan addresses the school-related barriers of (a) residency, (b) immunizations, (c) registration, and (d) school records.

The responses on both sets of surveys[6] indicated that the school-related barriers, although of importance, were not as important as the family-related barriers addressed in Section I.

The school district surveys indicated that for homeless children, the school-related barrier that was of most importance was immunization, followed (in descending order of importance) by lack of transportation, difficulty in getting academic records, difficulty in transferring between schools, and issues of residency. The average ratings for all of these barriers fell in the "least important" range, with the immunization barrier close to the rating of "important". The shelter survey responses indicated that for homeless youth, the most important barrier is residency requirements, followed by difficulty in transferring between schools, difficulty in getting academic records, immunization, and, finally, transportation. The fact that these barriers were not rated as important as the familty related barriers does not mean that they are unimportant. They remain barriers to the education of homeless children and youth, but barriers that can be lessened or removed by the school district.

In setting up procedures to eliminate these barriers, district and school personnel should be particularly sensitive to the condition of homelessness and the needs of the children/youth that stem from that condition. The process of assessing current procedures or practices for

[6]See Appendix D for summaries of both surveys

registering and enrolling homeless children/youth, including trying to obtain immunization and school records, should result in a smoother, more efficient procedure for all students who enroll in the school and district. That is to say, although the presence of and concern for homeless children and youth precipitate an assessment of current practices, their redesign should be focused on making the system work more effectively for all students, not just homeless students.

Residency

At the State Level

Responding to the mandates of the McKinney Act, in November of 1988 the state Department of Education issued a Legal Advisory clarifying state residency requirements as they pertain to homeless children and youth. A copy of this advisory was sent to all school districts and county offices of education in the state.[7]

At the Local Level

The governing board of each school district is urged to review current policies and practices regarding residency requirements to ensure that they are consistent with the Department of Education Advisory.

The Legal Advisory opines that a child living in the district is a resident of the district even though the child may not have a fixed home address. The fact that the child may be living in a tent, a shelter, or a car for an uncertain period of time, or is a runaway does not make him or her ineligible to attend school.

Immunization

At the State Level

The threat of increased communicable disease outweighs the desire for immediate enrollment of children into school. Therefore, the State Board of Education recommends no change in the requirement that children be up to date on their immunizations before they are enrolled

[7]See Appendix C for a copy of the Legal Advisory

in school.

At the Local Level

Districts are urged to examine their procedures to ensure that children whose medical records are lost or who are in need of immunization and do not have a family doctor, receive their immunizations immediately so as to lessen this delay in school enrollment. Districts should establish direct contact with local shelters for homeless families and shelters for youth and work with shelter directors to set up procedures for screening children/youth and getting them immunized prior to the time they register for school. County health departments also may be able to assist districts with the immunization of homeless children and youth. Each school receiving homeless students should have a plan for getting the necessary immunizations as quickly as possible. The plan may be a call to the district school nurse to come to the school, or it may be to have a health aide or a volunteer community member drive the child and his/her parent to a health clinic.

Registration

At the State Level

Since eligibility for admission to a school is based upon the parent or guardian residing within the school district boundaries, children and youth without parents or guardians cannot meet this requirement. In California, there are reportedly many children/youth who live without adult supervision, such as runaways; youth who live communally with other youth without adult supervision; and youth who as a result of family problems choose to live with friends. For schools to admit these youth without reference to the parent or guardian could place the school at risk of interfering with the discovery of a missing child; of interfering with the legal rights and responsibilities of the parents; or of sanctioning the illegal activities of a minor.

The State Board of Education believes that this issue needs further study before sound recommendations can be made. These children/youth should not be precluded from attending school; however the roles and responsibilities of other agencies (e.g. Juvenile Courts, welfare, probation, social services, law enforcement) ought to be

carefully explored before firm recommendations for legislative change or admission guidelines can be established. Therefore, the Board recommends that the Advisory Committee for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth be reconvened to conduct a study and prepare a report with recommendations on how schools can serve these children or youth without interfering with parents' or guardians' rights and responsibilities for their children. Such study and report should be completed before July 1, 1989.

At the Local Level

Until there is legal direction, districts will have to establish their own policies about how to enroll the youth who is living on his own but is not an emancipated minor. The State Board of Education recommends that when such a youth wishes to register at school, every attempt be made to contact the parent (with a record being kept of each attempt). If these attempts are unsuccessful, a responsible adult, such as a shelter director or a member of the local department of social services, should sign as temporary guardian. Districts should establish relationships with other local agencies, including "missing persons" agencies, to ensure that parent rights and responsibilities are not ignored.

School Records

At the Local Level

The McKinney Act requires that the school records of homeless children and youth be maintained and be available in timely fashion when the children/youth enter a new school district. Districts with homeless children and youth should establish procedures for following homeless children as their families move around in the district or to neighboring districts to ensure that the children's school records are available to the receiving school as quickly as possible.

If the school records of children are not readily available, the receiving school should have a system for immediately assessing incoming students' curricular knowledge and skills so that they can be appropriately placed in the instructional program with little or no delay.

When homeless youth enroll in school without records of past school courses and grades, the receiving school should assign a counselor, a specialist teacher, a regular classroom teacher or a team of professionals to determine the youth's appropriate placement. Through discussions with the youth and assessment of his or her knowledge and skill level in the various subject areas he or she needs to study in order to complete the school's course of study, appropriate placement can be made. Schools may find a Student Study Team approach a workable solution for placement decisions.

SECTION IV

PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR EVERY HOMELESS CHILD AND YOUTH

The State Board of Education recommends that a multiphased planning process be used in developing plans to ensure equal access to quality education for every homeless child and youth. Planners at both state and local levels should consider the following two-phased approach to planning.

At the State Level

In the initial phase of implementation of the State Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, the Department of Education shall:

- Inventory past and present programs relevant to "at-risk" students generally, and homeless students specifically,

- Identify and disseminate information about curriculum, instructional materials, and pedagogical practices that have proven to be successful with this student population.

- Identify alternative programs which could address the transient nature of the student population.

- Encourage school districts and schools to modify their School Improvement, Compensatory Education, or School-Based Coordinated Program plan--including the budget--to incorporate strategies and services to meet the needs of their homeless children and youth.

- Review related regulations to determine the need for modification in order to better meet the needs of these "at-risk" students. Consider state regulations to implement the compulsory school attendance laws for homeless children and

youth.

In the second phase of implementation the Department of Education shall:

- Disseminate and promote those curricula, instructional materials, pedagogical practices, and alternative programs that have been found to be successful in assuring homeless students and other "at-risk" students access to the full academic program at their school.

- Provide state support for the development of models.

- Sponsor conferences, training sessions, and publications for program and staff development.

- Encourage the use of the local program quality and compliance review processes to assess the effectiveness of the educational program, services, and support activities provided homeless children and youth.

At the Local Level

During the first phase of the Implementation of the State Plan, districts serving homeless children and youth are encouraged to:

- Identify the programs currently in use that are of high quality and best meet the needs of "at risk" students, including homeless children and youth--programs that are flexible, offer alternative learning strategies and opportunities, are offered in a safe and secure environment, are student focused, promote small group activities, and emphasize parent involvement.

- Identify instructional staff members who work well with "at-risk" children/youth, and promote the instructional strategies these staff members have found to be effective.

- Ensure that homeless students are included in the mainstream operations of the school and are not stigmatized or isolated because of their homeless condition.

- Adjust district budget priorities to develop a plan, provide for

training, and develop policies designed to meet the needs of all homeless children and youth in the district.

- Require that all schools with school level plans (School Improvement, Compensatory Education, School-based Coordinated Program schools) describe in their plans the instructional and support services for their homeless students.

During the second phase of implementation, the district should plan to:

- Provide training for all district and school staff members that will prepare them to work with the homeless children and youth, their parents and guardians, and homeless service providers such as shelter directors, social service workers, health services providers.

- Provide direct support to schools as they review, adapt, and implement programs that have been found to be successful with "at-risk" students, including homeless children and youth.

- Provide opportunities for instructional staff members who work with homeless students to visit effective programs for these children/youth.

- Establish means by which the instructional staff and the district outreach/case management teams can communicate together with the homeless children/youth and their parents or guardian.

- Utilize the local program quality and compliance review processes to assess the effectiveness of the educational program, services, and support activities provided homeless students.

SECTION V

Promoting, Implementing, and Monitoring the Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

At the State Level

The Department of Education shall assist districts in promoting the Homeless Plan through such activities as:

- Offering technical assistance in developing and writing local plans for the education of homeless students utilizing available media such as teleconferencing.

- Using the Advisory Committee members as well as department staff members as consultants to districts in the development of their plans.

- Making presentations about homeless children and youth at statewide conferences.

- Maintaining a clearinghouse for sharing local plans and ideas.

- Preparing an annual report on the education of homeless children and youth in the state of California for (1) dissemination to the media, (2) as incentive to school districts and their communities to continue their efforts to meet the needs of their homeless children and youth, (3) for future funding, (4) for possible legislation, and (5) for general information.

At the local level

The school district should:

- Appoint an interagency task force to develop a plan to ensure

access to school for all homeless children and youth in the district.

- Encourage the task force to report annually a summary of their plan and a progress report on its implementation for submission to the State Board of Education. Such report will be used in recognition of exemplary programs and the creation of the statewide annual progress report.

- Empower the task force to promote the plan within the school district and community and oversee the implementation of the policies and procedures necessary to put the plan into action.

- Monitor the implementation of the plan through regular, established district procedures so as to ensure that homeless children and youth have full access to a quality education.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Heather Andrews, Director
South Area Emergency Center
Sacramento

Vincent Bello, Consultant in Charge
Management Development Center
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Michael F. Berrigan, Director
Consolidated Programs
Sacramento City Unified School District

Edward F. Borovatz, Principal
Ark Alternative School
Santa Cruz City High School District

Stanley W. Brinton, Professor
College of the Redwoods
Eureka

Frank Brunings, Housing Coordinator
Planning Department
Salinas

Lois Carson, Executive Director
Department of Community Action
Riverside County

David C. Christiansen, Executive Director
Harbor Interfaith Shelter
San Pedro

Barbara Cohen, Manager
Student Assignment Office
San Francisco Unified School District

Judith Cox, Deputy Probation Officer
Santa Cruz County Probation

Maggie DeBow, Assistant Secretary
Program and Fiscal Affairs
Office of the Secretary
Health and Welfare Agency
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Ana M. Horta, Ph.D., Supervisor
Pupil Personnel Services
San Francisco Unified School District

Nathana Schooler, Coordinator
Student Attendance and
Adjustment Services
Los Angeles Unified School District

Maleia R. Sporalsky, Executive Director
Volunteers of America
El Cajon

Marta E. Vides, Directing Attorney
Public Interest Law Firm
San Jose

Sr. Laura Walton, Director
Maryhouse Shelter
Sacramento

Stephen Whitney-Wise
Program Manager - Homeless
Sacramento

Susan Wilder, Division Director
Services for Homeless Youth
San Francisco

Joe Williams, Executive Director
Economic Opportunity Commission
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Joyce Eckrem, Attorney
Legal Office

James Spano, Consultant
Compensatory Education Office

The Stewart B. McKinney Act of 1987

Subtitle B—Education for Homeless Children and Youth

SEC. 721. STATEMENT OF POLICY. 42 USC 11431.

It is the policy of the Congress that—

(1) each State educational agency shall assure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have access to a free, appropriate public education which would be provided to the children of a resident of a State and is consistent with the State school attendance laws; and

(2) in any State that has a residency requirement as a component of its compulsory school attendance laws, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws to assure that the children of homeless individuals and homeless youth are afforded a free and appropriate public education.

SEC. 722. GRANTS FOR STATE ACTIVITIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH. 42 USC 11432.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of Education is, in accordance with the provisions of this section, authorized to make grants to States to carry out the activities described in subsections (c), (d), and (e).

(b) ALLOCATION.—From the amounts appropriated for each fiscal year pursuant to subsection (g), the Secretary shall allot to each State an amount which bears the same ratio to the amount appropriated in each such year as the amount allocated under section 111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (as incorporated by reference in chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981) to the local educational agencies in the State in that year bears to the total amount allocated to such agencies in all States, except that no State shall receive less than $50,000 in any fiscal year. 20 USC 3801 note.

(c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—Grants under this section shall be used—

(1) to carry out the policies set forth in section 721 in the State;

(2) to establish or designate an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth in accordance with subsection (d); and Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth, establishment.

(3) to prepare and carry out the State plan described in subsection (e).

(d) FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF COORDINATOR.—The Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth established in each State shall—

(1) gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the State, and such data gathering shall include the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and homeless youth in elementary and secondary schools, and the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children; Schools and colleges.

(2) develop and carry out the State plan described in subsection (e); and

(3) prepare and submit to the Secretary an interim report not later than December 31, 1987, and a final report not later than December 31, 1988, on the data gathered pursuant to paragraph (1). Reports.

To the extent that reliable current data is available in the State, each coordinator described in this subsection may use such data to fulfill the requirements of paragraph (1).

(e) STATE PLAN.—

(1) Each State shall adopt a plan to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within the State which will contain provisions designed to—

(A) authorize the State educational agency, the local educational agency, the parent or guardian of the homeless child, the homeless youth, or the applicable social worker to make the determinations required under this section; and

(B) provide procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth.

(2) Each plan adopted under this subsection shall assure, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by State law, that local educational agencies within the State will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (6).

(3) The local educational agency of each homeless child or youth shall either—

(A) continue the child's or youth's education in the school district of origin for the remainder of the school year; or

(B) enroll the child or youth in the school district where the child or youth is actually living;

whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.

(4) The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

(5) Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected according to the provisions of paragraph (3), including educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged, and educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.

(6) The school records of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained— Records.

(A) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school district; and

(B) in a manner consistent with section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act. 20 USC 1232g.

(f) APPLICATION.—No State may receive a grant under this section unless the State educational agency submits an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) There are authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1987 and 1988 to carry out the provisions of this section.

(2) Sums appropriated in each fiscal year shall remain available for the succeeding fiscal year.

SEC. 722. EXEMPLARY GRANTS AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED. 42 USC 11433.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—

(1) The Secretary shall, from funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (f), make grants for exemplary programs that successfully address the needs of homeless students in elementary and secondary schools of the applicant.

(2) The Secretary shall, in accordance with subsection (e), conduct dissemination activities of exemplary programs designed to meet the educational needs of homeless elementary and secondary school students.

(b) APPLICANTS.—The Secretary shall make grants to State and local educational agencies for the purpose described in paragraph (1) of subsection (a).

(c) ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS.—No applicant may receive an exemplary grant under this section unless the applicant is located in a State which has submitted a State plan in accordance with the provisions of section 722.

(d) APPLICATION.—Each applicant which desires to receive a demonstration grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require. Each such application shall include—

(1) a description of the exemplary program for which assistance is sought;

(2) assurances that the applicant will transmit information with respect to the conduct of the program for which assistance is sought; and

(3) such additional assurances that the Secretary determines are necessary.

(e) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary shall, from funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (f), conduct, directly or indirectly by way of grant, contract, or other arrangement, dissemination activities designed to inform State and local educational agencies of exemplary programs which successfully address the special needs of homeless students.

(f) APPROPRIATIONS AUTHORIZED.—There is authorized to be appropriated $2,500,000 for fiscal year 1988 to carry out the provisions of this section.

Reports.
42 USC 11434.

SEC. 724. NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

(a) GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit to the Congress not later than June 30, 1988, a report on the number of homeless children and youth in all States.

(b) SECRETARIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.—

(1) The Secretary shall monitor and review compliance with the provisions of this subtitle in accordance with the provisions of the General Education Provisions Act.

(2) The Secretary shall prepare and submit a report to the Congress on the programs and activities authorized by this subtitle at the end of each fiscal year.

(3) The Secretary shall compile and submit a report to the Congress containing the information received from the States pursuant to section 722(d)(3) within 45 days of its receipt.

42 USC 11435.

SEC. 725. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this subtitle—

(1) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education; and

(2) the term "State" means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

LO: 5-88

DATE

LEGAL ADVISORY

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
721 CAPITOL MALL, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

CONTACT: Joyce Eckrem
Staff Counsel

PHONE (916) 445-4694

To: County and District Superintendents of Schools;
Directors of Welfare and Attendance

From: Joseph R. Symkowick, General Counsel
Legal and Audits Branch

Subject: APPLICATION OF THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This advisory is designed to assist districts with the interpretation of California's residency laws as they apply to admission to the public schools. Its purpose is to suggest ways of determining residency so as not to exclude homeless children from the public schools. It should not be generalized to populations other than the homeless.

In 1987 Congress enacted Title VII, subtitle B of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (Act) to address the educational needs of homeless children.[1] Congress stated that:

> The purpose of this subtitle is to make plain the intent and policy of Congress that every child of a homeless family and each homeless youth be provided the same opportunities to receive free, appropriate educational services as children who are residents of the state. No child or youth should be denied access to any educational services simply because he or she is homeless. Of particular concern are potential disputes between school districts over the placement of these children, which could result in the homeless being denied an education in any school district.[2]

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[1]42 U.S.C. sections 11432 - 11433.

[2]House Conf. Report No. 100-174 100th Cong., 1st Sess.; reprinted in [1987] U.S. Code Cong. & Admin. News, 362, 472.

To carry out the purposes of this Act, Congress has made grants to State Educational Agencies to begin the planning processes. It is anticipated that in future years, funds will also be available for allocation to local educational agencies.

As a recipient of these federal funds, California's plan must ensure that homeless youth are able to participate in education, in their school district of origin or in the school district in which the pupil is living, whichever is in the best interests of the child. The State plan must also contain a mechanism to resolve disputes which arise between districts over the responsibility to educate homeless children. The Act requires that "any State that has a residency requirement as a component of its compulsory school attendance laws...will review and undertake steps to revise such laws to assure that homeless youth are afforded a free and appropriate public education."[3]

California's compulsory education law[4] has long been interpreted as incorporating a residency requirement,[5] requiring the pupil to attend school in the district wherein the pupil's parent or legal guardian resides.

Explicit exceptions to the residency requirement are contained in various education code sections.[6] Interpretive exceptions have historically been made for children who live with relatives or other responsible adults, other than their parents or legal guardians.[7]

There is, however, no explicit residency exception for homeless children. As the residency law is typically applied, if the parents cannot provide proof of a street address within the district, the child is denied admission. Furthermore, because the term "residency" is ill-defined and because of fiscal and desegregation concerns, school officials are often reluctant to accept temporary addresses, post office box addresses and similar indices of residency. Yet, requiring proof of an actual street

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[3]42 U.S.C. section 11431.

[4]Education Code section 48200.

[5]See, for example, Laton Joint Union High School v. Armstead (1933) 130 Cal. App. 628; 11 OPS. CAL. ATTY. GEN. 59; 26 OPS. CAL. ATTY. GEN. 269; 67 OPS. CAL. ATTY. GEN. 452.

[6]See, for example, section 46605 (newly formed districts); section 48204 (interdistrict attendance); sections 56156.5 and 56167 (redefining residency requirements for special populations).

[7]11 OPS. CAL. ATTY. GEN. 59

address may be an overly restrictive interpretation of the residency requirement[8] and may deny otherwise eligible pupils their right to receive a public education.

This advisory attempts to clarify the purpose and meaning of the "residency" requirement, and how it can be applied to effect the legislative purpose without unnecessarily denying homeless pupils access to public education.

1. What does residency mean for purposes of admission to the public schools?

"Residency" should not be construed so as to require a permanent and fixed home to which one intends to return in perpetuity, but rather as:

> Personal presence at some place with no present intention of definite and early removal and with the purpose to remain for an undetermined period, but not necessarily with a design to stay permanently. [See discussion below]

Education Code section 48200, from which the residency requirement is derived, is California's compulsory education law. It establishes that parents, legal guardians, or other persons having control or charge of a pupil must send that pupil to school. It compels the pupil to attend. The primary purpose of the statute, therefore, is to ensure that every person of school age attends school.[9] Thus, it should be liberally construed to effect this purpose.

By reviewing the exceptions to the residency requirement (e.g., section 48204, Interdistrict Attendance) another purpose-to ensure orderly and predictable attendance patterns within the various districts - is evident.[10] A similar purpose is to limit

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[8]California Education Code section 2 requires that the code "be liberally construed, with a view to effect its objects and to promote justice."

[9]11 OPS. CAL. ATTY. GEN. 59, 60.

[10]Laton Joint Union High School Dist. v. Armstead, supra, 130 Cal.App. 628. The legislative and interpretive history of the compulsory education law indicates that the legislature intended that districts have some way of restricting admission to the public schools. Prior to 1955, the Attorney General interpreted the residency requirement as allowing districts to exclude children from school attendance if the child was living with other than the parent or legal guardian for the sole purpose

the benefit of a free public education to those who reside within California. But even these exceptions are designed to ensure that children attend school. They are not designed to exclude children or to make admission prohibitively cumbersome.[11]

Thus, it is the State Department of Education's position that the residency requirement must be broadly and liberally construed to ensure that all school-aged children who reside in California are permitted to attend the public schools.

The word "residence" is a term with no definite legal meaning. It is subject to varying constructions, depending upon the purposes of the particular statute.[12]

Sometimes "residence" is used in the legal sense of "domicile". Blacks Law Dictionary, Fifth Edition, distinguishes these two terms as follows:

> Residence. Personal presence at some place with no present intention of definite and early removal and with purpose to remain for undetermined period... but not necessarily with design to stay permanently....
>
> Residence means living in a particular locality, but domicile means living in that locality with the intent to make it a fixed and permanent home. Residence simply requires bodily presence as an inhabitant in a given place, while domicile requires bodily presence in that place and also an intention

---

of attending school there. (11 OPS. CAL. ATTY. GEN. 59) In 1955, the legislation was amended, replacing the word "resides" with the word "lives". The Attorney General interpreted this amendment to mean that the pupil was eligible to attend the district wherein he lived without an interdistrict agreement and without regard to his motive or intent for living in the district. (26 OPS. CAL. ATTY. GEN. 269) In 1977, the statute was again amended to restore the term "resides". It is of interest that this latter amendment coincides in time with much of the desegregation litigation, and was probably intended to restore the prohibition against living with friends or relatives simply for the purpose of attending the public schools there.

[11]Further evidence that the primary purpose of the compulsory education law is to ensure school attendance is that sections 48291-48295 provide for penalties for non-attendance.

[12]Nadler v. California Veterans Board (1984) 152 Cal.App.3d 707, 715 n.5; Burt v. Scarborough (1961) 56 C.2d 817, 821.

> to make it one's domicile [citations omitted]. "Residence" is not synonymous with "domicile", though the two terms are closely related; a person may have only one legal domicile at one time, but he may have more than one residence [citations omitted].

It is the State Department of Education's position that "residence" should not be confused with "domicile" for purposes of school admission and that a permanent and fixed dwelling place is not necessary to establish residency for school purposes.

2. Must a pupil provide evidence of a permanent home/street address in order to enroll in a public school?

No. Although this is a permissible method for districts to determine residency, it should not be applied routinely so as to exclude children from school attendance. Section 17.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code states, in part, that the child's residence is "the residence of the parent with whom a child maintains his or her place of abode" (emphasis added). Blacks Law Dictionary, Fifth Edition, defines "abode" as "One's home; habitation; place of dwelling; or residence...Living place impermanent in character". A temporary shelter would certainly meet the test of either a residence or an abode. Other less traditional habitats, such as vehicles or tents, could also meet the definitions of residence or abode. The important factors are that the child is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain, but not necessarily to remain permanently. The intent of the law is to keep children in school, not to exclude them under the definition of residency.

3. What indices of residence, other than a street address, may a district accept?

Some districts accept letters from a social service agency verifying that the person does in fact live within the district boundaries. Hotel or motel receipts are also accepted by some districts. Although Post Office Box numbers are not favored, they could be combined with an affidavit by the parent declaring that the family is homeless and lives within the district. Where the family may be living on the street, it is permissible to accept an affidavit from the parent that they are living within the district with the purpose of remaining there.[13]

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[13]Some proof of residency is necessary to prevent abuse of desegration, interdistrict and assignment policies. However, districts should look for alternatives to avoid excluding those who are in the unfortunate situation of being homeless.

Where the pupil has no family (e.g., runaways), but wishes to attend school, it is recommended that the school district work cooperatively with either the social service agency or a legal advocacy group.

4. Must the original district serve a pupil whose family has temporarily been housed in another district but states the intention of returning to the original district?

Although the above analysis of residence would seem to relieve the original district of the obligation to serve the pupil, the federal law requires a determination of the child's best interests. The federal law states that:

> (3) The local educational agency of each homeless child or youth shall either --
>
> > (A) continue the child's or youth's education in the school district of origin for the remainder of the school year; or
> > (B) enroll the child or youth in the school district where the child is actually living, whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.[14]

[Emphasis added]

If it is clear that the relocation is temporary, and if distance factors are not prohibitive, the original district ought to make arrangements to continue serving the pupil through interdistrict agreement procedures[15] if other factors indicate that it is in the best interests of the pupil.[16]

There are numerous other issues surrounding the education of homeless children and youth that are not addressed by this legal advisory. This advisory is intended solely to reassure districts that it is not unlawful to serve children who have no home. The State Department of Education will be working with an advisory

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[14] 42 U.S.C. section 11432(e)(3).

[15] Education Code section 46600.

[16] The federal district court in Orozco by Arroyo v. Sobol (1987) 674 F.Supp. 125, ruling on a preliminary injuction while the merits were being argued, ordered the school district wherein the temporary residence was located to serve the pupil. Distance, duration, and the nebulous intent of the parent influenced this result.

committee to address such issues as timely receipt of health records and procedures for dealing with immunization issues, assignment, labeling, identification and reporting, and run-away youth. Further program advisories may be developed and sent to school districts as determined necessary or helpful.

If you have any questions regarding the legal residency issues raised herein, please contact Joyce Eckrem, Staff Counsel at 916-445-4694. Any policies which your district implements should, of course, be reviewed by your own counsel.

SAMPLE AFFIDAVIT

I, _____ declare as follows:
(Name)

1. I am the parent/legal guardian of _____ who is of school age and is seeking admission to _____ School District.

2. Since _____, 1988 our family has not had a permanent home, however, we have been residing within the _____ School District boundaries and intend to remain herein.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of California that the foregoing is true and correct and of my own personal knowledge and that if called upon to testify I would be competent to testify thereto.

Date: _____ _____
(Signature)

I regularly contact and receive my mail at:

_____
Name
_____
Address
_____
Phone Number

I can be reached for emergencies at:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

SUMMARIES OF THE SURVEYS OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COUNTY OFFICES

In November of 1988 the Department of Education sent to all school districts and county offices of education in the state a survey form designed to establish the numbers of homeless students in the state and to assess their educational needs. A copy of this form. follows this summary. Of the 1,087 forms distributed, 518 were returned. The distribution of the returned forms was as follows:

Elementary school districts----------208
High school districts----------37
Unified school districts---------- 89
Large districts (more than 12,000 students)-- 43
County offices of education----------12

In addition 129 districts returned the form with the sole notation that there were no homeless children in the district and therefore the form was irrelevant. With the exception of one suburban district of 14,500 students these districts tended to be small with an average enrollment of 793 students and located in the more rural areas of the state.

Numbers of Homeless Children and Youth

The survey form identified 6 categories of homeless children and youth, those aged 5-11, 12-14, and 15-18 years who were attending school, and those of the same ages who were not attending school. The numbers of children and youth in each category from all completed surveys (398) are as follows:

Students attending school:
a) Ages 5-11--4,254 b) Ages 12-14--1,930 c) Ages 15-18--2,052

Students not attending school:
a) Ages 5-11--- 925 b) Ages 12-14---729 c) Ages 15-18--1,255

Totals:
a) Ages 5-11--5,179 b) Ages 12-14--2,659 c) Ages 15-18--3,307

Grand total: 11,145 homeless school-aged children.

it is important to note that 134 of the districts responding did not enter any numbers into any or more than half of the categories of homeless students and many wrote that they do not know how many homeless children there are in any or half the categories. It is also important to note that this is the first time districts have been asked to report the numbers of homeless children and youth and it is probable to expect that many responses were estimates at best. The reader, therefore, is cautioned to not consider these numbers as definitive.

In addition to the 129 districts that returned the survey form indicating only that there were no homeless children or youth in their districts, 158 districts that completed the form also indicated that there were no homeless children or youth their districts. Of these, the majority (121) were elementary school districts and with a few exceptions, were small districts in the less populated areas of the state.

To summarize, 55% of the districts responding indicated that there were no homeless children or youth in their school district. An additional 26% of the responding districts left blank at least half the categories of homeless students with many indicating that they did not know how many homeless children or youth were in their district. The remaining respondents identified 11,145 homeless children and youth.

Educational Needs of Homeless Children and Youth

The survey form asked respondents to rate a list of factors which pose barriers to homeless children and youth. The scale was "most important", "important", and "least important". All categories of districts rated "family stress" as the most significant barrier to education. The second most significant barrier was "parents keeping

children out of school". High school districts responded that "students not wanting to be identified as homeless/runaway" was an important factor as was "having to 'parent' younger children". Large school districts also responded that "having to 'parent' younger children" was an important factor. Another significant factor for the large districts was "high mobility from shelter to shelter".

In response to the question "Do you see the homeless as a priority concern in your district?" 40 districts responded "Yes", 80 responded "Somewhat" and 220 responded "No".

The next survey question asked respondents to rate a series of actions or services which would help homeless children stay in school. Again, the scale used was "most important", "important', "least important". The most significant responses from all categories of districts were "better coordination between school and community agencies" and "day care so children are not caring for children".

The next two survey questions were open-ended questions. The first asked what other ideas respondents had for making learning more accessible to homeless children. A rich and varied set of ideas issued from this question, the majority of which have been incorporated into the suggestions contained in the accompanying State Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The next question--"What would you like teachers, school administrators, and parent groups to understand about the children you serve and their needs?" yielded answers that reflected the concerns of the advisory committee that helped frame the basic philosophy of the state plan. Comments most frequently made addressed:

(1) the need for sensitivity on the part of teachers and other adults to the special needs and conditions of homeless children and youth,

(2) the fact that homeless children and youth are as fully entitled to high quality education as are students who are not homeless, and

(3) the need for recognition of the fact that a homeless child's/youth's primary concern often is survival, not education.

The final survey question asked whether or not respondents would be interested in being involved in sharing ideas and alternative

approaches for improving education for homeless children/youth. The response was 62 "yes" and 73 "no".

School districts and county offices of education will be resurveyed in the fall of 1989. It is expected that after those results are tallied and analyzed, a much clearer picture will emerge of the number of homeless children and youth in the state of California and their educational needs.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN

Please complete this survey and return by November 30, 1988. Use additional pages if necessary to further explain your comments.

Name of school district _____

Address _____

District contact person _____ Phone _____

1. What number of children residing in your school district are homeless, as defined in the cover memo, and attending school?

   a) Ages 5-11 ____ b) Ages 12-14 ____ c) Ages 15-18 ____

2. What number of children residing in your school district are homeless and <u>not</u> attending school?

   a) Ages 5-11 ____ b) Ages 12-14 ____ c) Ages 15-18 ____

3. Some barriers to the education of homeless children have been identified. What is your perception of these barriers? Mark as many as you wish.

   a) most important b) important c) least important

_____ Students not wanting to be identified as homeless/runaways	_____ Difficulties getting academic records
_____ Lack of quiet place to study	_____ Lack of transportation
_____ Family stress	_____ Health/Immunization
_____ Difficulties transferring between schools	_____ Having to "parent" younger children
_____ District refusing to register students because of residency requirements	_____ Parents keeping students out of schools
_____ Fatigue	_____ High mobility from shelter to shelter

_____ Other _____

_____ Other _____

4. Do you see the homeless as a priority concern in your school district? ¦ ¦ yes ¦ ¦ somewhat ¦ ¦ no
Please comment.

5. What would help homeless children you serve to stay in school? Mark as many as you wish.

a) most important b) important c) least important

_____ Better coordination between school and community agencies

_____ Special transportation available

_____ Easier way to get school records

_____ More awareness and sensitivity on the part of school staff

_____ Centralized "alternative" site for homeless children

_____ Tutoring available in the shelters

_____ Designated advocate or ombudsman in the school district

_____ Day care so children are not caring for children

_____ Alternative or non-traditional instruction

_____ Other_____

6. What other ideas do you have for making learning accessible to homeless children?

7. What would you like teachers, school administrators, and parent groups to understand about the children you serve and their needs?

8. Would you be interested in being involved in sharing ideas and alternative approaches for improving education for homeless children/youth?

Mail to:
California State Department of Education
Coordinator - Homeless Children/Youth
Compensatory Education Office
P.O. Box 94244-2720
Sacramento, CA 94244-2720

If you need further clarification, please call Jim Spano (916) 445-2590

II What Educational Services Do Homeless Shelters Provide; What More Is Needed

We surveyed 255 homeless shelters in California who provide services to families with children or to unaccompanied minors. The questionnaire asked shelter directors to survey shelter residents during the week of October 24-28, 1988, identifying the number of families with dependent children, unaccompanied minors, the number of children residing and the number of those children in school. The survey included emergency shelter providers, transitional or long term shelter providers, domestic violence shelters, and programs serving older adolescents who are homeless without their families. The survey also asked shelter providers to identify barriers to homeless children's education, explain whether they conducted special education programs for homeless children, and identify what kinds of programs or program components would assist the children in their shelter to receive an education. Finally, the survey asked respondents three open-ended questions about additional problems their children have getting an education, additional ideas they have about programs to resolve those problems, and general information they would like the community to have about the special needs of these homeless children. A copy of the survey is attached to this preliminary summary.

Program Information

One-hundred-forty-two shelters responded to our survey, or 55 percent of shelters surveyed. Two-thirds of the respondents provide short-term shelter, for 30 days or less to their residents. One-third provide shelter for 30-60 days. These shelters serve more than 1400 school-age children; the largest share (828) are elementary-aged children; approximately 300 are junior-high age and 250 are high-school youngsters. An additional 250 are under 5, and may be eligible for preschool enrollment. **Shelters reported that only 2/3 of the children in their shelters attend school;** those that do attend do so approximately 90% of the time.

An encouraging finding of this survey was that 22%, or **nearly one -fourth, of the respondents, provide some sort of educational program for their residents.** From among this group, a few identified working relationships with the local school district as a special program

(other shelters may well have such relationships and not identified them as a special program); a small number identified play therapy or special domestic violence therapy as special programs. Six programs operate on-site school programs, provided by the school district or by volunteer or paid teachers hired by the shelter. Five shelters operate a tutoring program or a formal after school program. Eight programs operate child care programs with programming for school-age children.

Barriers to School Participation

Our respondents believe that the family dynamics involved with homelessness itself are the major barrier to children's participation in school. We asked shelter providers to rank barriers to school attendance as most important, important, or least important. The barriers identified could be roughly sorted into school-based barriers (residency requirements, immunization records, etc.) and family-based barriers (stress, parent resistance to school enrollment, etc.). Shelters reported that family stress, family mobility among shelters, parental resistance to enrolling the child in school and transportation problems were the most significant barriers to children's education. Difficulties with school registration requirements and transferring between schools also rank disturbingly highly. Fatigue, records problems and no place to study were among the least significant barriers to children's education. Having said this, however, it should be noted **every barrier was identified as most important or important by at least 45% of the respondents.**

The barriers faced by older children living on their own are somewhat different from those of children living in homeless families. Our survey included 26 programs serving unaccompanied minors, while a small percentage of the total respondents, represents 90 percent of all such shelters. A special review of the barriers to education cited by these programs found that school barriers jumped into prominence. Stress and mobility continued to be significant problems for these children. But **school-based barriers to transferring, residency requirements, parenting responsibilities for younger children and difficulty getting records are most important or important barriers in more than two-thirds of the programs which serve older children.**

The survey asked in an open-ended way whether respondents found additional barriers to children's getting an education. In general, responses to this question mirrored the numerical ranking of listed barriers to education and underscored national research on the serious and sustained impact of homelessness on the developmental needs of children. The most frequent response underscored the substantial and serious personal problems experienced by homeless children. Respondents talked about children's emotional needs, educational deficits, traumatic mental and physical symptoms, and needs for both counselling and tutoring. Respondents repeated several times that survival needs take priority over educational needs for both children and families. A second large body of respondents added the special needs for child counselling, parental counselling and special security precautions for families homeless because of domestic violence. The third most prevalent group of responses commented on the numerous special costs for school-age children, and the lack of resources in these families to deal with them: gym clothes, socially appropriate clothes, field trips, school supplies and other costs. Finally, related to the first response, several respondents underlined parental resistance to school enrollment: mobility, fear of officials, and lack of a family priority for education all create situations where parents do not encourage or facilitate school attendance. A number of issues were raised by one or two respondents: special problems for older children who have suffered repeated failures in school; language barriers; school resistance to enrollment in attendance-impacted districts; children's drug and/or alcohol abuse problems; and a lack of special services for children with learning and behavior disorders.

Solutions to Barriers to School Participation

Shelter operators believe that increased sensitivity to the special needs of these children and special tutoring programs to meet those needs are very important solutions. For all school-age children, our survey respondents believe that day care programs with special services to school-age children and a designated advocate or ombudsman in the school district would also be most useful in serving homeless children. Older children need a special alternative site for their schooling or nontraditional instructional needs to meet their educational requirements. These responses underscore the particular vulnerability of these children, and the finding that most of them are behind in school, need special help if they are to succeed. Older children especially have

problems with clothes, supplies, and the other trappings of acceptability.

Shelter operators were also asked to provide open-ended suggestions for other solutions that were not included in our ranked list. Many used the opportunity to underscore the results of our ranking of solutions: these children need flexible educational programs, individualized tutoring, special educational diagnosis for learning disabilities and sustained advocacy within the school system. **Regular and sustained communication between educators, welfare departments, shelter providers and supportive service providers was frequently cited as a needed community solution.** In addition, respondents called for special services to meet these children's needs: **specialized vocational education, training in life skills or living independently for older children and counselling or mental health services to deal with the stress these children face are missing components in many homeless service systems.** Repeatedly and eloquently, shelter operators call for special compassion and sensitivity for these children: every child deserves our special protection and care, and these children have so little.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN

Name of person completing form:_____

Position: (Director, teacher, other)_____

1. Does your shelter program serve:

   a) Families with dependent children_____

   b) Unaccompanied minors _____

2. What is the average length of stay of families in your shelter:

   a) 1 - 30 days _____ c) 61 - 90 days _____

   b) 31 - 60 days _____ d) 91 - 120 days _____

3. How many children are you serving this week? _____

   a) Ages 5-11 _____ b) Ages 12-14 _____ c) 15-18 _____

4.a) How many of the children you are serving this week are not attending school while in the shelter? _____

   b) For those that do attend school, what percentage of the time do they attend?_____

   c) Does your shelter have an existing education program for kids? _____
   If yes, would you please describe it on a separate sheet?

5. Some barriers to homeless children's education have been identified. What is your perception of the barriers to education for homeless children? Mark:.... A-- most important; B--important; C--contributing, but least important.

_____Students not wanting to be identified as homeless/runaways	_____ Difficulties getting academic records
_____Lack of quiet place to study	_____ Lack of transportation
_____Family stress	_____ Health/Immunization
_____Difficulties transferring between schools	_____ Having to "parent" younger kids
_____ District refusing to register kids because of residency reqirements	_____ Parents keeping kids out of schools
_____ Fatigue	_____ High mobility from shelter to shelter

6. Are there other problems homeless children you serve have getting to school; getting an education?

7. What would help homeless children you serve to stay in school? (Please rank A, B, C as in question 5)

____ Better coordination between school and community agencies

____ Special transportation available

____ Easier way to get school records

____ More awareness and sensitivity on the part of school staff

____ Centralized "alternative" site for homeless children

____ Tutoring available in the shelters

____ Designated advocate or ombudsman in the school district

____ Day care so children are not caring for children

____ Alternative or non-traditional instruction

8. What other ideas do you have for making learning accessible to homeless children?

9. What would you like teachers, school administrators, and P.T.A.s to understand about the children you serve and their needs?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. We know your time is precious and are grateful you have shared your knowledge with us. We'll keep you posted on the State Plan as it develops.

Please return IMMEDIATELY in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

CALIFORNIA HOMELESS COALITION
CAL/NEVA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION
926 J Street, Room 408
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 443-1721

APPENDIX E

Scenarios of Homeless Children and Youth

The following scenarios were developed by the Advisory Committee on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in recognition of the variety of situations in which homeless children and youth might be found as well as the variety of strategies which might be employed in order to ensure their enrollment and continuance in school. The scenarios are included here in the hope that they might provided some constructive ideas to teachers, principals, shelter directors, social workers, district office staff members, community service agency staff members, and others as they strive to meet the educational needs of the homeless children and youth in their community.

Homeless Children Living with their Parents in a Shelter

The school district in which the shelter is located has designated a coordinator of services to homeless children and youth as a member of a larger task force promoting services for students identified as being "at risk". In addition to this districtwide coordinator, each school receiving homeless children has identified one staff member to facilitate services for the children and to act as their advocate. The facilitator and other staff members at the school work together to provide a school experience for homeless children that is as much like that received by other children as possible.

The shelter provides a safe environment in which the children feel comfortable. The shelter director and the district coordinator work together to place newly received children in school in a minimum of time and with a minimum of paperwork. The governing board of the school district has expanded the definition of residence to include

shelters and parents are able to enroll their children either in the school closest to the shelter or to continue their enrollment in their former school, whichever is in the best interest of the children. If the decision is made to keep the children in their formenr school, the district provides transportation. The shelter director works with the parents to establish or clarify the children's health records. If immunization records are not attainable, the shelter director arranges for the necessary immunizations either through public health services or the school nurse. At some shelters a classroom teacher helps in the academic assessment of the children so that the school can place them promptly into the appropriate learning setting. In addition, a shelter teacher provides instructional support through tutorial and socialization activities designed to help the children be successful in the regular school program.

A buddy system has been established at each receiving school to ensure that all new students feel welcome. Another child of the same grade level is identified as a buddy and he/she accompanies the new student throughout his/her first few days in school. The school homeless facilitator and a classroom teacher meet regularly with the child, taking his/her history, providing reassurance, and assessing his or her academic skills and knowledge. The classroom teacher and facilitator also determine the child's eligibility for special services, placing him/her in the appropriate programs, As feasible, the special services needed by the child are provided after school so as to ensure that his/her school experiences are as much like other children's as possible. The children remain at school as participants in the district recreational program until late afternoon when they return to the shelter.

Homeless Children Who Are Living with their Parents on the Streets

In order to find and place in school cildren who are living with their parents in their car, in a makeshift shelter under a bridge, or any other place that is normally not used as a regular sleeping accommodation by human beings, the district has established an outreach program. Using a team of people who can provide services

to and serve as advocates for homeless families, such as Child Welfare and Attendance staff members, the district nurse, county health and social services staff members, district program specialists (Special Education, Bilingual Education, Chapter 1), shelter directors, the district searches out homeless families using a variety of methods, including media spots, newpaper ads, posters, and so forth. Members of the team then make contact with the families to assist them in getting their children back into school. The kind of assistance provided by the team is determined by the needs of the family. In one instance, the team may first have to establish a certain level of trust with the family before any subsequent steps may be taken; in another, transportation may have to be provided to get the children to the clinic for immunizations, then to the school for registration; in yet another when parents resist attempts to place the children in school, contacts with local law enforcement officers and/or Child Protective Services may be necessary. In every instance, team members provide followup services designed to help the family keep the children in school.

Once the child is registered in school he/she is eased into the school program as quickly as possible with immediate assessment of both personal and educational needs, the assignment of a buddy, and the identification of specific adults at the school responsible for ensuring that the child's needs are being met as he/she is making the transition back into the classroom. The school staff make every effort to prevent the child from feeling stigmatized by his/her homeless situation. The school homeless coordinator works closely with the outreach team members to make sure that the student and his/her family are receiving the ongoing support services necessary for the student to stay in school.

Homeless Youth Who Do Not Live with their Parents

As part of the district outreach program the homeless coordination team has established regular contact with the youth drop-in centers throughout the district. The director of each center informs the youth of the educational opportunities available to them

through the district high schools, alternative schools, adult education, and community college, encouraging them to continue their education. The center director, district outreach team member, and the homeless facilitator at the receiving school work collectively to remove the barriers to the youth's re-enrollment in school and placement in the most appropriate educational setting. When a homeless youth's parent is not present to enroll him/her in school, the center director and/or the homeless facilitator at the recieving school work to establish contact with the parent and with other local agencies as necessary to ensure that the parent's rights and responsibilities are not ignored.

The district is exploring the establishment of alternative centers which will have direct liaison to the schools where instruction is provided and where the homeless youth can remain for sufficient time to complete their education.

A. PROGRAMS WHICH UTILIZE LOCAL SCHOOLS

I. Family Shelter, Oakland Salvation Army
810 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94607 (415) 451-5547
Pearl Pritchard, Assistant Director, Social Services

A. Program Description

The Oakland Salvation Army Family Shelter can house up to 13 homeless families at a time. These families may stay from two to four weeks and while there, the children must attend school.

Because many of the families are Oakland families, they are encouraged to keep their children in the school they attended prior to becoming homeless. The Salvation Army has a formal arrangement with the Oakland School District for children to continue attending the original school and has developed an expedited school registration process. Bus passes are given to the children for this purpose and the shelter provides adult tickets when the child is too young to ride the bus alone.

This shelter also has an afternoon program beginning at 1:00 p.m. each day. Children three years old and older may attend. School aged children come after school and may play and have their homework supervised. This program has a director and an aide.

B. Program Innovations

Credit for the initiation of this school program goes to Pearl Prichard, assistant director of the Salvation Army Center for Social Services in Oakland. The family shelter has been in existence for at least 15 years and as the number of children showing up at the door increased, Mrs. Prichard began negotiations with the school district. Her first effort was with the principals of the neighboring schools. She found that the principal was not the person who could make registration and placement decisions and eventually began working with Ralph Griffin of the Office of Student Services in the

Oakland Public Schools. With the cooperation of Mr. Griffin and many others, (Mrs. Prichard is clear that it takes many people to make this program work) a plan was devised.

As reported by The Advocate, "Like most school districts, the Oakland district requires parents to show three pieces of identification (any combination of the following: driver's license; electric bill; telephone bill; water bill; rent receipt; voter registration card; a check imprinted with name, address and phone number). If a family is staying with friends or relatives, the person with whom they are staying can provide this identification. A written note from a shelter will also allow parents to use the shelter's address for purposes of registration." If parents have trouble supplying this information, they meet with Mr. Griffin who helps them fill out a "request for transfer" form with the code, "neighborhood school." This code alerts the secretary at the new school that this is a homeless child and should be enrolled without the required ID. For the required record of immunization there is assistance in locating them and if they cannot be found new shots are given, usually through the Alameda County Health Department. There is a formal agreement with the district allowing homeless children to remain in the same school even if they are forced to move around within the district to find shelter.

II San Francisco Unified School District Task Force on
Education of Homeless Youth
170 Fell Street, Room 10-A
San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 565-9680
Barbara Cohen, Student Assignment Manager

A. Program description:

Representatives of public and private agencies that deal with the homeless population met biweekly through most of 1988 to discuss ways to serve homeless children. The goal was to ensure enrollment in regular public schools of all homeless children, where possible. Specific results of the task force's actions:

--operating agreement by schools to operate with flexibility to enroll homeless children

--a formal protocol was developed by the Task Force to outline how that flexibility can be exercised

--news articles publicized the project in the fall, to ensure timely enrollment of homeless children at the start of the year

--working relationships between shelters and other homeless programs and the schools were developed to facilitate referrals

--the Task Force has met through the fall, but plans at this point to disband

The results of the program are that the formal protocols make sure that all members of the system know the procedures for participation in education by homeless children. Relationships among providers/school system have moved beyond individual trust-based relationships to a formal institutional sharing relationship. Some of the procedures that may have existed before are made publicly available.

A. Program innovations

--working links to the public health department were made so that children without immunizations would be referred and treated immediately. Lack of immunizations are the one barrier to immediate enrollment, as this requirement cannot be waived.

--school district developed procedures for finding school records, including affidavits if records missing. These procedures were adapted from procedures in use with immigrants.

--school district developed operating agreements so that every child, once enrolled, can stay in the school they selected if the parents

want that and if transportation can be arranged. The district has a good public transportation system and an integration-based bus system in many areas.

--school district has developed a guardianship/emancipation form for use when birth and residency papers don't exist. The school district will serve any child where there is any adult willing to take responsibility and sign the guardianship form. The only problem arises when there is no adult willing to take responsibility.

--Task Force developed a circular routing system so that wherever the child surfaces (at DPSS, shelter, school), the family is referred to other parts of the system where necessary. The protocol developed by the school system was sent to all shelter providers as well as to individual schools.

--The school has a holding class (Counselling Center) where children can attend who are not ready for assignment

C. Problems to be Resolved

Immunization requirements continue to be a barrier for some children. The Task Force will consider the risks to a procedure for approving enrollment pending receipt of health records.The length of time for emancipation procedures for children on their own are a barrier for children with no adult willing to take responsibility. Finally, the protocol makes no provision for continuity of services for children whose families move, for individualized instruction for very troubled children, or for dealing with social hostility ("what happens at the end of the bus ride").

B. PROGRAMS WITH ON-SITE SCHOOLS

1. Joan Kroc Center, St. Vincent de Paul
   1501 Imperial Avenue
   San Diego, CA 92101 (619) 233-8500
   Mary Case, Director

A. Program Description

St. Vincent de Paul operates a multi-program facility in downtown San Diego that includes emergency one-night shelter, short-term shelter and long-term transitional housing. Short-term residents must have a relationship with a community-based organization which can program a family assessment and case management services to move the family to permanent housing. Transitional residents come primarily from the short-term program. They stay an average of six months and pay an adjusted rent based on income.

The San Diego County Schools office operates a special school across the street from the Kroc center. The school provides a full educational program and a meals program provided through the Kroc center. Attendance at the school is required for school-age children residing in the shelter. The Kroc center provides an afternoon program for children at the center aimed at kindergarten through eighth grade children. Recreational activities and tutoring/homework assistance programs are provided. The after-school program includes credentialled staff and a large number of volunteers. Finally, the center also provides a drop-in program for younger children during the day. This is a short-term program so that parents can do chores, laundry, etc. Parents must be on-site in the shelter while their children are in the drop-in program. The center plans to have a full-time child care program for children 0-5 years soon, and is negotiating with the San Diego Head Start program to provide such services.

B. Program Innovations

This near-site school was developed by the County Office of Education using Department of Public Social Services funding. In order to qualify for funding, children must be classified as child protective services clients because of their special need for education. Because the

school operates specifically to serve homeless children, its intake, assessment and ongoing educational services can be geared to the special needs of these children, and no stigma is associated with attendance. The school is year-round, and the county office provides extensive resources beyond textbooks, including field trips, computers, and special educational assessment services. Large numbers of volunteers are recruited by the Kroc center, including Foster Grandparents and community volunteers, who are screened by the Center volunteer manager and referred to the school director. The Center's health clinic provides immediate health record reconstruction, and school records can be developed at the school after enrollment.

C. Problems to be Resolved

Most of the educational problems typically associated with homeless programs have been resolved by the addition of a near-site school with clinic and associated coordination. The problems for this program are those of the children: there is a high incidence of abuse and violence in their lives, and many of their parents have substance abuse problems. There is a great need for expanded counseling services to work with the children's special social and emotional needs.

II. OPTIONS HOUSE, Hollywood
1754 Taft Avenue
Hollywood, CA 90028 (213) 467-1929
Donna Cole, Director of Development

A. Program Description

Options House is a small shelter for runaway youths with a new educational program on site. Options House is affiliated with the High Risk Youth Program, Project Homeless Youth, of Los Angeles and is one of four private nonprofit teen shelters participating in the Homeless Youth Project.

In April of 1988 the Los Angeles Unified School District placed a teacher at Options House. The teacher is credentialed and is assisted by a student from Glendale College. Math and English skills are stressed in this educational program; however, independent living skills are a priority. Classes are available to the youngsters from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. A local business college assists in this program and the L. A. Partnership for the Homeless and fund raising pay the teacher and provide for program costs.

B. Program Innovations

The youngsters respond to a person who will listen and care. Many of the kids have been abandoned by their parents at ages 11 and 12 and have been on their own for a year or two before arriving at Options House. An on-site school offers one way to provide assessments and a sense of opoprtunity to young people who are unwilling school attenders. During the preiod they are at Options House, attempts are made for family reunification if that is possible or for emancipation.

C. Problems to be Resolved

Going to school is not high on the list of priorities for the teenagers, 12 to 18 years, who stay at Options House; survival takes a much high priority. With a two-week maximum stay, there is little opportunity for an educational program to have much effect.

III. Santa Clara Family Living
1620 Oakland Road
San Jose, CA 95131 (408) 947-
Barry DelBuono, Consortium Director

A. Program Description

The Santa Clara Family Living Center is one of several shelters and programs operated by the Emergency Housing Consortium of San Jose, a private nonprofit organization. The Santa Clara shelter houses 38 homeless families for up to 60 days. At any one time there are 160 to 180 people, 120 of them children, living in this former hospital building on the grounds of Agnews State Hospital.

All children at the Living Center must attend school, either at the shelter or at the nearby neighborhood school. Six years ago, when the shelter began, all children attended the local school until impacted classes and short-term attendance became an issue and the school administration began meeting with the shelter director. During the second year of the shelter's operation an on-site one-room school for kindergarten through sixth grade was established. Because the school has space for only 24 children, the others continue to attend the neighborhood school. The shelter also has an on-site Head Start pre-school program and an after school program provided by a separate organization, Growth and Opportunities, where children have supervised play and can do their homework.

The Santa Clara Unified School District provides a teacher, an aide, materials, a daily hot lunch and a snack for the on-site shelter school. The children are counted toward the state ADA funds for the District. Parents who are guests at the shelter volunteer at the school, as well. The teacher assigned to the shelter school was identified by one of the shelter board members as one who might be best fitted for the assignment. Ed DeBoer has been the shelter school teacher since its inception and stays on because the kids want him. He has developed individualized materials to use in the classroom, sometimes visiting the county dump to find them.

Although immunization is not required for the shelter school, all children are encouraged to be immunized, with needed immunization performed by Health Care for the Homeless. The District does require birth records and immunization records for

those attending the nearby school. Because there is a Head Start program connected to the shelter, the physician who works with that program is sometimes available to develop health records.

B. Program Innovations

The requirement for school attendance and the on-site school allow children to continue their education in spite of the family's homelessness and to provide some stability in the lives of the children. School is the "one institution that affects kids, other than their family," in the judgement of Barry Del Buono, the Consortium's director.

According to the director, the school program is successful because of the enthusiasm of the teacher and the flexibility of the program. He points out that cooperation between the school district and the shelter is essential. This is one of three schools in shelters for the homeless, nationwide.

C. Problems to be Resolved

Older children, sixth grade and above, must take a bus to the local school and, even if their best clothes are worn, feel out-of-place. Attendance is much better at the on-site shelter school than off-site and the director would like to have a variety of programs available for the older children as well as an on-site school.

IV. SOUTH AREA EMERGENCY HOUSING CENTER

4516 Parker Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95820 (916) 455-2160
Heather Andrews, Director

A. Program Description

Children of the families living at the South Area Emergency Housing Center (SAEHC) in Sacramento have had the opportunity to attend "school" since 1975. Actually, the school is a licensed day care center, and was organized and started through the energies of Heather Andrews, Director of the Center, who saw the need for some daily structure for children who were under stress. Over the years the Center has been funded by the Community Development Block Grant program of the Sacramento Housing and Redevlopment Agency. Through an arrangement with the Sacramento City Unified School District and the County Schools, a District teacher will soon be on-site. That program is described separately.

SAEHC's children's center is in two rooms of a former residence which also houses the central kitchen, dining room and living quarters for the night supervisor in this four-building famiiy shelter where 13 families may live for up to a month. There is also a large playground with equipment available for the children. Attendance at the children's program is not required but is encouraged and, because it gives parents freedom to search for jobs, housing, or other services, it is welcomed by the parents and is usually at capacity. Children three years old (if out of diapers) to 14 years are welcome to the daily program of art, games, and stories. A credentialed teacher who also holds an early childhood education permit heads the program and is assisted by one full time and one 3/4 time ECE teachers. In addition, a Foster Grandparent and volunteers help in the program.

B. Program Innovations

In the opinion of Tom Cole, the head teacher, a school program for homeless children, to be successful, must be adaptable to the needs of the children who are attending that day. There must be adequate non judgemental staff who enjoy the children and communicating with them verbally. Many of the children have been out of school for four to six months when they come to the shelter. Although the present children's program is helpful, a full school program should be available to prepare the children for the school they enter when the family finds permanent housing.

South Area Emergency Housing Center
Sacramento

Proposed Education Program

Beginning in early 1989 there will be an education program funded through the Sacramento City Unified School District and the Sacramento County Office of Education on-site at the South Area Emergency Housing Center. There are five goals for this program: "safe space" environment, skillful assessment, positive activities, appropriate academic placement and transition to the receiving school. With a maximum stay of 30 days for the families living at SAEHC, there is little time for the children to participate in a formal school program. This new educational program is devised to prepare children to enter school when the family finds permanent housing. In the words of SAEHC's Director, ..."there is a need to encourage school participation by homeless children through provision of the assessments necessary to insure that children are appropriately placed in school so that school can be a positive experience. Hand in hand goes the need to insure an easy transition both for overburdened parents and fearful children by providing families leaving the shelter for permanent housing the information needed by school districts. It is important in this process to give these children identity and allow them to be come part of the system that so frequently excludes them. All of these things need to be accomplished in an atmosphere that is safe, non-judgemental, stress reducing and esteem building."

The Sacramento Unified School District will provide an independent study teacher who will plan and supervise appropriate activities. He or she will also develop and assemble assessment tools to determine the current level of performance of the child and "develop an individual education plan to provide for cognitive growth." SAEHC staff and volunteers can then provide one-to-one tutoring to ensure successful participation and progress. The County Office of Education is supplying computers, text books, and other materials. The teacher will also be able to access support services such as counseling, psychological, evaluation, and curriculum development available through the District.

When immunization records, academic records and assessment records have been compiled they will be sent with the family as it leaves the shelter and a receiving school has been identified. Records will also be maintained at SAEHC for those families who do not identify a permanent address immediately upon leaving the shelter.

The Center provides meals to the residents, additionally, lunches are provided by the Child Care Food Program. A public health nurse visits the Center twice a week and those families who are Medi-Cal eligible use the physician of their choice. Others are referred the the U. C. Davis Medical Center (in Sacramento) as drop-ins. The nurse will administer or readminister immunizations or reconstruct records of immunizations. No birth records are required.